

create a national electoral commission are handicapped by the Kengo/Tshisekedi split. Both claim the right to name the commission's 22 opposition members (Mobutu adherents also number 22) and both have presented lists to the bureau of the transitional parliament.

The influx of well over 1 million Rwandan refugees in June 1994 into eastern Zaire (Kivu) has created a heavy economic and environmental burden for the local population. In August 1995, the Kengo government, following the lifting of the April 1994 arms embargo against Rwanda, asserted that the refugees constituted a security threat, demanded the repatriation of all refugees by December 31, 1995, and expelled more than 13,000. This threat was not implemented, because Mobutu recognized that to do so would negate the positive international effect for Zaire of its sheltering of the refugees.

CANADIAN POSITION

Canada suspended bilateral aid to Zaire in October 1991 and closed its Embassy in Kinshasa in May 1993. Essentially, local conditions made it impossible to pursue Canadian government programs in Zaire, such as trade promotion and bilateral aid. The Head of the Canadian Bureau in Kinshasa administers a Canadian Fund for Local Initiatives.

Canada's main current concern is to encourage Zaire to cooperate in the orderly and voluntary repatriation of Rwandan refugees and in the search for lasting solutions in the Great Lakes region. Continued tension could further destabilize the region, including Zaire, and could result in further humanitarian disasters. Our critical view of the inhumane August 1995 refugee expulsions and their possible consequences for regional stability was communicated officially to the authorities in Kinshasa.